

The Saddest Thought.
Once I was the saddest thought,
Ere I began to doubt you,
That sometime I must let you
Perhaps, to do with out you.
For death parts dearest friends;
From him there's no coming;
And partings worse than death
Our fears are ever shaming.
New with new dawn's hope
No thought of you is blended;
Day dispense evermore,
Though morning dreams are ended.
And now the saddest thought
That haunts my heart about you
Is this—that I have learned,
At last, to do without you.

HOW AN AUTHOR WON HIS BRIDE.

In the study of Don Eusebio Mendez, one of Madrid's most noted writers, there sat, early in February, 1874, two youthful figures at a heavy oaken table, and busied themselves, ostensibly, with the gods of the ancient Greeks.
On the table lay a chaos of heavily-bound folios, neatly-written manuscripts, delicately cut copper-plates, pens, graters, and pencils; but, strongly as the scene encouraged serious study, Manuel's and Alma's thoughts were far from being occupied with the mysteries of Hellenic mythology.
The youth held the little white hand of the girl, who was scarcely sixteen, tenderly in his, and Alma leaned her head so trustfully on the shoulder of her companion that one need have but a slight knowledge of human nature to divine what was uppermost in the minds of the youthful pair. And now Manuel bled forward and imparted a kiss on the rosy lips of the dark-eyed Castilian that must dispel the last doubt, if any remained.
"By heaven!" cried Manuel, "I wish we were alone on some solitary island, where, observed and disturbed by no one, we could do as we would the live-long day. Do you know, love, it costs me a terrible effort to always treat you as a son when your father is present."
"You must be patient—we shall not always be under this restraint," replied Alma.
"I am now twenty years old, but Don Eusebio Mendez seems to think that his ward is still a child. The mere fact of his leaving us alone the whole afternoon, day after day, proves that he looks upon us as being, at most, but children."
"And are you displeased because he leaves us alone?"
"Yes and no. I thank Heaven that I have a daily opportunity to talk to you undisturbed; but, on the other hand, it annoys me to know that my uncle thinks me so blind that I cannot see that his daughter is the most lovely girl in all Madrid."
Alma blushed, and passed her hand over her temple and cheek, as though she would temper his indignation.
"I believe," Manuel continued, "he would laugh in my face if I were to ask his consent to our marriage. He would, I have no doubt, think I had lost my wits."
"You must not be so severe on papa for forgetting, in the midst of his daily affairs, that the years have wings. Let us wait patiently; time finds a solution for all things."
"How very philosophically your little ladyship can talk! I wait and wait, and in the meantime the sleek Senor Perez will get such a foothold here that I cannot out him."
"Manuel!" cried Alma, reproachfully.
"Oh, I've read enough of woman's constancy! One thing is certain—the fellow is in high favor with your father. Senor Mendez swears by 'The Enchanted Nightingale,' and he is continually quoting passages from 'The Fallen Pomegranate.' Perez has a good social position, a handsome fortune, and knows how to flatter. What more is necessary to win over any father who has a marriageable daughter?"
"But, if Senor Perez will marry me, he must begin by obtaining my consent."
"Bah! You will resist for a while, but finally, fatigued by your father's continual remonstrances, you will yield, like the good, dutiful daughter that you are. I shall wait and see if my little comedy, which in a few days will be played at the Royal Theater, is successful. If it is, then I shall go to your father and say: 'Uncle, I have won a position in the world. My 'Gormaz' has received the indorsement of the capital, which opens to me an honorable career. Uncle, I love your daughter, and am loved by her in return. Consent to her becoming my wife, and make us happy.'"
"And if he refuses?"
"He will not, he cannot refuse. He might turn a deaf ear to an obscure, unknown suitor, but he must receive the laurel-crowned poet with open arms, or be untrue to his whole past life. What would Madrid say if he should refuse to accept the author of 'Gormaz' as his son-in-law?"
"But suppose your comedy should fail?"
"It will not fail. I am neither vain nor conceited; but, when I finished the piece, I felt that I had achieved the first step to fame.
And the eyes of the youth shone with a noble enthusiasm as he spoke of the first fruit of his dramatic talent.
At that moment well-known steps were heard in the hall.
"There is father!" whispered Alma, and the lovers turned hastily to their books and papers.
The door opened, and a stout, elderly, apparently good-natured gentleman, with a big, brightly-polished shoe-buckle glistened as cheerfully as did his little, mobile eyes. He carried a dress-coated dress under his arm, and at his side hung the small, elegant dress-worn in those days of the Castilians.
"Ah, this is what I like to see!" he cried. "Always at your books, always adding to your little stock of knowledge! What have you here? 'Treatise on Mythology,' by Guillermo de Mora. Excellent! 'Jupiter and Hera'—they seem to interest you especially—the book has been open at that chapter for fully a

week. But now put the gods of Olympus aside for a while. I have something of importance to say to you both. Come here and sit on the ottoman."
"What I have to say more especially concerns you, Alma. In April you will be sixteen. At that age your sainted mother was already my wife."
Alma began to lose color, but she succeeded in appearing composed.
"You know the author of 'The Fallen Pomegranate,'" continued the old gentleman, "my friend Senor Perez. No man in all Castile imitates Virgil as he does! 'The Fallen Pomegranate' compares favorably with any pastoral poem that have ever been written."
"Certainly, papa," stammered the girl, glancing toward Manuel, who knit his brow, and stared at space.
"My daughter, what do you think of Senor Perez?"
"Think of him, father?"
"I mean, how does he please you? A handsome man he certainly is. True, he is no longer young, but what he has lost in youthfulness he has gained in dignity."
"But what is that to me?"
"Well, now, my daughter, that your happiness is secured. Senor Perez is not only a highly-gifted and very amiable, but also a wealthy man. He sees in you the companion of his choice—he is, and long has been, he tells me, greatly enamored of you, and, as I know that you had no aversion for him, I have promised him that he shall be my son-in-law."
"Father!" cried Alma, in a tremulous tone, "you cannot be serious!"
"And why not? You are now of a marriageable age, and you know that my word has always been as good as my bond; that I always kept my promises. Is it, perhaps, possible that you can think of refusing so brilliant an offer? Answer me!" cried Don Eusebio, in a commanding voice. "Why do you think I am not serious?"
"Father," said she, after a pause, "I know that you consider only my good; but this is so sudden, so unexpected, that I—I that am at a loss to know what to reply. Give me three days for reflection. Next Sunday I will tell you if—"
"Very well," interrupted Senor Mendez, with a frown. "True, it's very improper for a daughter to make conditions with her father; but no matter, so be it. Within ten days we shall celebrate your betrothal."
Alma dropped her chin on her breast and remained silent.
"And now as to what I have to say to you, Manuel," continued Senor Mendez, in a more friendly tone, and he winked to Manuel, and led him, with a mysterious air, to one of the windows.
"You have kept the secret?" he asked, in an undertone. "Alma has no suspicion that I am the author of 'The Midnight Elopement'?"
"Not the slightest, so far as I know," replied Manuel.
"I would not have the child know for the world, until after my triumph, that her father has mounted Pegasus. Apropos, what I wanted to tell you: the two comedies will be played this evening—your 'Gormaz' between eight and nine, and 'Midnight Elopement' between nine and ten o'clock. I am very anxious to see how the public will receive the offspring of our muses."
This conference ended, Don Eusebio added a final recommendation to his daughter, and left the room.
No sooner were the young people again alone than Manuel seized his cousin's hand, and cried:
"Never fear, Alma. He shall not have you, never! I am the dogged doggerel writer—as sure as my name is Manuel Alonzo de Castros!"
Two hours had passed since this exciting scene occurred.
"Everything goes just as I would have it," murmured Don Eusebio. "I shall be the father-in-law of the most distinguished poet of the metropolis, and before the evening is over, this head, God willing, will also be laurel-crowned! What can delay them so long?" he suddenly murmured. "I asked them to come at four o'clock, and now it is nearly a quarter after. Hark! I hear them—yes, that is his Olympian step! And the others are with him. Approach, my friends, approach!"
As he finished this monologue, he threw the door open and welcomed his visitors, one after the other, as they entered, with great cordiality.
First came Don Anastasio Perez, the author of "The Enchanted Nightingale," a long, fleshy figure, with flowing red locks and an indescribable nose, and a chin that always seemed struggling to form a semicircle.
Behind Don Anastasio Perez stood a little, supple figure of a most unassuming exterior, Don Enrique Pungo.
The third and last arrival, a man of the class that have nothing to distinguish them from the common herd, was Don Rodrigo Prullo, a professor of Greek.
"It is all arranged, my dear Perez," said Don Eusebio, half aloud, to the author of "The Fallen Pomegranate," as they took their seats. "She has consented; in a week we will celebrate your betrothal."
"I thank you, my noble friend—I thank you," replied Don Anastasio. "Allow me, in recognition of the honor you do me, to dedicate my next poem to you."
"Willingly," answered Don Eusebio; "I shall be proud to have my name associated with products of your communications with Calliope. You do me great honor, Don Anastasio. Thanks, a thousand thanks!"
"Caballeros," said he, "can you divine why I asked you to come to see me to-day? You all look at me astonished. I said that you do not divine. This evening, at the Royal Theater, they will produce the comedy that the Muses, in my silent hours of meditation, have been pleased to inspire me with."
"Bravo! bravo!" shouted Perez, Pungo, and Prullo.
"At the same time that Madrid assists at my debut as a disciple of Thalia," continued Don Eusebio, "we shall also witness the first representation of an attempt at comedy-writing by my nephew Manuel."
"It was explained," cried Perez, in the most emphatic tone his squeaking lips furnished. And what are these

productions that are thus sprung upon us called?"
"They are called 'Gormaz' and 'The Midnight Elopement.'"
"And which of the two pieces is yours, caballero?"
"That, gentlemen, by your leave, shall for the present be a secret," replied Senor Mendez, smiling radiantly. "You will do me the honor, I trust, to witness the representation. Then you can guess. I am very curious to see whether you will then be able to tell which is the work of the uncle, and which that of the nephew."
"I protest in the name of all the Muses against this insinuation!" cried Don Anastasio. "With all due respect for the talent of your nephew, I protest! The idea of mistaking his composition for yours is simply ridiculous! A nineteen-year-old boy and a man like you—senior, how can you do yourself or us such injustice?"
"After the performance," the caballeros will honor me again with their company," said the worthy senor. "We will then discuss the events of the evening over a glass of Xerez, and the secret, if not out, shall be disclosed."
Again Manuel Alonzo de Castros sat with Alma Mendez in the study of the learned Don Eusebio.
In the salon across the hall, the clock struck three-quarters to ten. In the dining-room adjoining, Jose, the factotum of the establishment, was busy setting the table in his best style.
Manuel clasped Alma round the waist. He was thoughtful, but by no means sad. Alma's flushed cheeks and reddened eyes made it evident that she had been crying.
"The fate of your comedy is now decided," said she, after a while. "I am surprised, Manuel, that you content yourself at home to-night."
"Alma," replied Manuel, in solemn tone, "since I have been confronted with the possibility of losing you, who are more to me than all the world besides—since then I am indifferent to everything else. Whether I am applauded or not, I care little. Can I not at any time write another and a better comedy? But should you be torn from me, where should I find another to replace you?"
He had hardly finished when the voice of Don Eusebio was heard in the corridor.
"Where is my nephew?" cried Don Eusebio, in breathless haste. "Call him, somebody! Send him immediately to me here in the salon! Quick, Jose! I must speak with him!"
Herewith he burst into the salon, slung his gold-bordered hat into one corner, and threw himself full length on an ottoman, with the air of one in the deepest despair, only to spring to his feet again the next minute.
"Unheard of! unheard of! he exclaimed, as he strode to and fro in the wildest excitement. "What will Don Anastasio say? I am a ruined man! Ruined! ruined! ruined!" In his frenzy, he struck his forehead with his clenched fist again and again.
"Ah, here you are at last," said he to Manuel, as he entered the salon. "I began to think you were never coming. Look at me, boy—but, for Heaven's sake, not in that stupid way! You are a genius, boy—you are a genius!"
"How so, uncle?" asked Manuel, who could not help smiling at Don Eusebio's comical mien.
"How so?" repeated the uncle, in an impatient tone. "How so? Go into the street and you will hear the sparrows cry out from the roof that the nephew is a genius and the uncle an ass!"
"But, my dear uncle!"
"Silence!—silence, I tell you! Do you want to drive me mad? Oh, that I should live to see this day! My reputation is ruined forever! Listen, my boy, and you shall know the cause of my despair. I was in my box to-night, and waited with a beating heart for the performance to begin. Finally—it seemed an age to me—the curtain rose, and your characters made their appearance. In the very first scene between Gormaz and his servant it was evident that the audience was very much pleased. Elvira came on, the plot began to be more involved, and the interest and applause increased at every moment. I wept tears of joy. Already in imagination I saw a double triumph; for I said to myself: 'If Manuel's 'Gormaz' is such a brilliant success, my 'Midnight Elopement' must also be well received.' And yet to think what its fate has been! Well, they went on with your 'Gormaz,' and when the curtain fell on the last scene there was round about of applause. I thought the braves would never end; but they did end after a while, and the curtain rose again."
Here Don Eusebio approached Manuel and laid both hands on his shoulders.
"Look at me, my nephew," said he, after a pause. "In me you see a disgraced, a ruined man! Great Heaven! why did I ever undertake to drop a comedy?"
"Why, uncle, what are you saying—disgraced? ruined?"
"Don't interrupt me—I know what I am saying! Well, finally, the curtain rose again. My Princess Caracabocod came on and sought to win over to his interest the major-domo of the Princess Viribillina. On my soul, Manuel, the scene is not a bad one! But whether our auditors had become fatigued, or whether I was the victim of some disgraceful intrigue, I know not, but certain it is that the dialogue between the prince and the major-domo made not the least impression; it never got a ripple, and when the princess appeared on the balcony and began the beautiful romance, the house resounded with a whistling and hissing that beggars description. It seemed to me as though the eyes of the whole audience were upon me. I felt as though I could sink a fathom deep into the earth. From scene to scene the perfidious racket and confusion increased, until finally the pit cried out with such unfeeling, such brutal persistency: 'End it! end it!' that they were compelled to drop the curtain before the piece was finished."
He let his chin fall on his breast in silent despair.
"Oh, unfortunate man that I am!" he began again, after a few moments. "In half an hour they will be here, and I shall have to acknowledge my disgrace! Oh, that my tongue had been paralyzed before I told them that one of

the comedies was mine! Why was I ever so foolish as to thrust after dramatic laurels! Instead of a triumph, behold me with a fool's cap and a crown of thorns! And, to add to my chagrin, I told my friends that one of the pieces was mine, and asked them to witness the representation of both in order to see if they could decide which was the uncle's and which the nephew's. They will be here directly. Oh, how I dread to see them! To-morrow, the children in the streets will point their fingers at me! Prullo is such a news-carrier! And Don Anastasio! what will he think of me? He will despise me! My reputation—the reputation I have taken me a lifetime to acquire—is destroyed in an hour! In future I shall be looked upon as being nothing more or less than a conceited old fool!"
And he sank utterly crushed into the nearest armchair.
Manuel had listened to this outburst in silent amazement. But now he approached the mourning senor, and, laying his hand on his shoulder, said:
"Calm yourself, uncle. Your reputation shall not suffer from to-night's mishap. The greatest geniuses, under unfavorable circumstances, have met with failures."
"But not so disgracefully, so ignominiously," replied Don Eusebio, with an incoherent shake of the head.
"Listen, uncle, I will make you a proposition. No one knows as yet that you are the author of 'The Midnight Elopement,' I of 'Gormaz.' What say you to our changing roles? An unfortunate debut cannot hurt me much, and you will escape the ridicule of those who are envious of you, and will be sure, if you remain the author of the unfortunate comedy, to handle you roughly."
Don Eusebio looked up like one who, on the scaffold, hears his pardon announced.
"Manuel, my boy, is it possible! You will!—But no, no, I cannot accept such a sacrifice! Herein I recognize the son of my dear, never-to-be-forgotten sister."
His emotion overcame him, and two big tears rolled slowly down his cheeks.
"You are right, Manuel," said he, after a pause; "they readily excuse in the nephew what would disgrace the uncle forever. I accept your generous offer, and you can reckon on my eternal gratitude."
"I do this the more readily, uncle, because there is something I would ask in return," stammered the youth, blushing deeply.
"Speak, nephew. You can ask me nothing that I will deny you."
"Uncle, I love Alma. Consent to her becoming my wife."
Senor Mendez looked at the youth amazed; this was evidently a request he was not prepared for.
"Are you mad, boy?" he cried after a pause. "Alma is betrothed to Don Anastasio!"
"Not yet," replied Manuel, in a firm tone. "You gave her three days to consider. Alma loves me, and you may be sure she will never willingly give her hand to another."
Don Eusebio shook his head incredulously.
"Banish that idea from your head!" said he, in a peevish tone. "I have given my word. Alma marries Don Anastasio, and no other!"
"Nothing can change you!"
"No, nothing. It pains me to refuse you, but I never break my word."
"Very well," replied Manuel, proudly. "Then I shall remain the author of 'Gormaz.' Love would have conspired for me the loss of fame. As you destroy my happiness, leave me at least my laurels."
"Manuel!" cried Don Eusebio, in terror, as he wiped the perspiration from his forehead. "You will not abandon me in my extremity, my dear Manuel? If it should be known that I am the author of 'The Midnight Elopement'—he made a terrible gesture.
"You know my conditions, uncle. If Alma remains the bride of Senor Perez, then you must shoulder the 'fiasco.'"
The good old caballero, for a few moments, was a prey to conflicting emotions. It was not long doubtful, however, which would come out victorious. The clock struck ten. His friends might arrive at any moment.
"Call Alma!" said he, after striding up and down the room for a few moments.
Manuel hastened to do his uncle's bidding.
"Is it true that you love this good-for-nothing here?" Don Eusebio asked his daughter as she entered the room.
Alma looked down blushing and nodded an affirmative.
"Hump! you do, eh? Then take her," he thundered, turning to Manuel, "marry her, only leave me alone! I have whirled as though it would fly into a thousand pieces. Begone, begone! I hear steps. You have my blessing!"
Manuel pressed his lady-love to his heart, and they both left the room, with a grateful glance at Don Eusebio.
The following year Manuel led his pretty cousin to the altar, and no one at the wedding wore a more joyous mien than the worthy father of the bride.
And often, in after years, when he recalled his charming grandchildren on his knee and looked on the face of his blooming and happy daughter, whose beauty seemed to increase from year to year—often then he silently glorified in the 'fiasco' that opened to him and his the door of domestic felicity.
As for Manuel Alonzo de Castros, he became one of the most distinguished dramatists of Spain, and if among his works there is one of doubtful merit, entitled "The Midnight Elopement," the reader of this narrative knows how it chanced to be there.

Timber in Foreign Countries.

During the spring of 1874 the British government addressed a circular to the representatives of Great Britain in the principal timber producing countries of Europe, in the United States and Brazil, in Cuba and Honduras, asking for information as to the production and consumption of timber; information desired more particularly by the commissioners of our woods and forests. Fifteen questions were asked. These related to the sorts of trees grown in each country, the uses made of each kind, the ownership of forest lands, the causes of increase or decrease in the acreage of forests, the quantity of wood cut annually, and the amounts exported and consumed at home. Inquiries were also made as to the ascertained influence of forests on local climate, rainfall, floods, etc., and, particularly in Switzerland, whether any steps have been taken to replant the sides of the mountains, so as to stay the action of rain in denuding the soil. Various reports on all the foregoing topics have now been received, from which we may here cul a few brief extracts, commencing the work itself to the careful attention of all who take an interest in forest preservation, a subject full of importance, not only because timber is indispensable to human existence, but because we may point to Palestine, to Spain, and probably to many regions in North Africa, to show how the gradual destruction of forests will change the character of a country and its inhabitants forever. In Bohemia, during the past ten years, a species of worm, which seems to act like an epidemic, has been causing great devastation in the forests. The entire side of a range of hills may be seen sometimes laid bare of timber by the incursions of this worm disease. The diminution of forests in parts of Austria, and more especially in Hungary, has been followed by baneful consequences, such as long droughts and tremendous winds, which fill the air with increasing clouds of dust and considerably increase pulmonary diseases in towns which have become totally unsheltered. Pest, Presburg, and Vienna are now perfectly intolerable during three parts of the year from this cause. At Rio de Janeiro, thunder storms, formerly of daily occurrence, are now rare; and the cause is supposed to be the destruction of the forests which surrounded the town, as new roads have been made. Hence, in 1852, yellow fever visited the place, and has never left it since, though trees are being planted in every street.
In Hesse and Baden greater prudence has been displayed, four-fifths of the former Duchy and one-third of the latter are wooded, and the law requires that every thirty years land which has once belonged to the cultivation of trees must return to its original employment. In Sweden the timber resources are immense; Lapland has never been surveyed, but is reckoned, with the northern Provinces, to contain some 30,000,000 acres of forest. Unfortunately, the unceasing and enormous demands for wood, especially for charcoal, house building, and fuel matches, is telling rapidly on the productive power of the forests; this fact is of world-wide importance, for there is hardly a maritime country, except China and Japan, to which Swedish wood in some form does not find its way. At last, in 1874, a law was passed forbidding the felling of any trees less than seven inches in diameter, at sixteen feet from the ground. This statute applies only to the Bohemian forests. If extended to all Sweden, as it probably will be, it may greatly affect the mining interests of Great Britain, for it will cut off the supply of small timber known as "pit props." In Switzerland there is now a sylvan society, and great pains are being taken to induce people to replant cleared and denuded mountain slopes, so as to prevent the damage which floods, landslides, and avalanches have of late years so frequently inflicted. Switzerland also has an industry—that of wood-carrying—which she had made peculiarly her own, although it was not introduced into the Bernese Oberland before 1815. This wood-carrying annually uses up an enormous quantity of wood of all sorts. In Cuba there are abundant forests, which must have increased since 1868, when the insurrection broke out, for there has been very little cutting of late years; but, as we might expect where the Spanish are concerned, no more care is taken, no less recklessness is shown by the farmers who cut wood for their use in Cuba than in any other timber-land part of the globe.—Land and Water.

How They Fight Grasshoppers.

What farmers there are in Colorado, says a letter writer, are fighting grasshoppers with water, and fire, and smoke, and death-dealing ambuscades, and engines of destruction. Of all these the "grasshopper bell" is the most popular and perhaps the most efficacious. Its name gives a very good conception of its practical workings. A long sheet-iron box, open at the top, is swung close to the ground between two wheels by which it is moved over the field. Rising two or three feet above the top of the box, and bending forward from the rear, is a broad sheet of tin or sheet-iron. When in use a fire is built in the bottom of the furnace, which is then pushed against the wind, the overhanging wing or sail taking the hoppers as they rise and feeding them to the flames in a hurry. Sometimes a miniature windmill is added to the outfit, and sucks in all the locusts for yards and yards around, destroying them by millions. Millions more have been drowned in irrigating ditches by cunningly devised traps which prevent their escape from the water. While they were young and green, and before their wings were grown, several tons of them were destroyed by a confidence game which deserves description. Between the young hoppers and the young wheat long rows of dry straw were strewn, which soon became literally black and alive with the wriggling little insects. When no more hoppers could be accommodated, the straw was fired. Another device was to drag over the hopper-infested regions a tarpaulin plentifully coated on the under side with coal tar, which is instant death to the pests. Still, with all these disadvantages against them, grasshoppers are apparently as numerous as ever.

Items of Interest.

Why is a pig the most provident of animals? Because he always carries a spare rib or two about him.
Kansas teacher—"Where does all of our grain product go to?" Boy—"It goes into the hopper." "Hopper! What hopper?" "Grasshopper," triumphantly shouts the lad.
In Rome a law has been passed condemning persons guilty of blaspheming God, Christ or the Virgin and saints in the streets to a month's imprisonment for the first offense and six months for the second.
At Abilene, Kansas, is a wheat field containing one thousand three hundred acres covered with wheat in excellent condition. The crop has been contracted for at \$1.25 per bushel, and will probably bring \$20,000.
"Now where's my summer pants?" yells the impatient hunter, after a fruitless hunt from cellar to attic; and his wife timidly points to a pair of china Samuels on the mantelpiece and meekly murmurs, "they were so cheap."
The report of the secretary of the American iron and steel association shows that the falling off in the consumption of iron in this country for the year 1874, as compared with that of 1873, was about 500,000 tons, while the production was much greater than was anticipated.
During a sanitary survey recently in Lincolnshire a man was found, aged ninety-five years, who had been in the habit of drinking a gallon of beer before breakfast, another during the day, and a few extra pints at night to top off with, and who had never been ill a day in his life.
This year the southern counties of California sent to San Francisco 5,380,000 oranges, 620,000 lemons, and 80,000 limes. The consumption of California is about 10,000,000 oranges a year, and 5,000,000 are brought from Mexico and the Pacific Isles.
Deaf and dumb men don't stand much show in Texas, anyhow. Recently, while one of them was feeling in his pocket for a slate pencil wherewith to communicate his wants, a native shot him in the hand, on the supposition that he was getting out a weapon.
A lady who loved Bulwer entered a bookstore just as one of the clerks had killed a large rat. "I wish to see 'What will be done with it!'" she said to a boy behind the counter. "Well," said the boy, "if you'll step to the window, you will probably see him sling it into the back lot."
The man who drops a poker because the handle is warm, and then carefully picks it up again by the end that is red hot, generally gets about as much sympathy as the man who rushes to the newspaper office to have an explanation published, and finds when the correction comes out that it's ten times as bad as the original.
A Paris paper tells of a lady who is introducing a new era into furniture fashion. She has acquired all her chairs, sofas, and carriages stuffed with aromatic herbs, which emit an agreeable perfume, and not too powerful, around the air. This fashion, it appears, is of Eastern extraction, and is prevalent throughout the greater part of Asia.
A shopkeeper purchased of an Irish woman a quantity of butter, the lumps of which, intended as pounds, he weighed in the balance and found wanting. "Bride! it's your own fault if they are light," said Biddy, in reply to the complaints of the buyer, "it's your own fault, sir, for wasn't it with a pound of your own soap I bought here myself that I weighed them with!" The shopkeeper had nothing more to say on that subject.
A census enumerator in Albany asked an old maid her age. "Thirty-one," she replied. "Oho!" ejaculated the questioner, incredulously, "are you married?" "No, sir," she said. "Alma!" was the second exclamation, accompanied by a knowing leer. The aged maiden glanced over her shoulder into the book, saw that he had put her down as fifty-one, and an instant later he had more scratches and less hair than when he entered.
New Use for the Telegraph.
The Buffalo Courier tells of a clerk in one of the telegraph offices in that city who, being the last to leave for his dinner, found the door locked as is usual, but, as is not usual, discovered he had left his key in another coat pocket two or three blocks away at his hotel. The windows were two stories up, and he did not exactly see the point of an exit that way. And every minute his dinner was growing cold and his temper correspondingly hot. He rattled the door, tried to pick the lock with a single nail, and repeated softly to himself choice extracts from profane history, but there he stood, and relief seemed appallingly remote. Did he wait there till his brother clerks returned from their seven courses, from soup to doughnuts, to let him out? Not he. An idea struck him and the impression left bore its fruits. He telegraphed to St. Thomas, Canada, had it repeated to Detroit, Mich., whence it was returned, according to accompanying instructions, to an opposition company at Buffalo, the result of which was to send a boy to his room after the key and down to his office to release him. He was in time for dinner.
The Armies of Europe.
Col. de Valliere, the head of the Swiss school of artillery, has published an interesting essay on the number of men maintained in the various great continental armies and the expenses involved. Adding such reserves as may actually be summoned into the field, he makes the numerical establishments not very far from 6,500,000 of which 1,700,000 are allotted to Germany, 1,600,000 to France, 1,500,000 to Russia (excluding her Asiatic land forces as not to be counted on for a contest in Europe), 900,000 to Austria, and 700,000 to Italy. Of this number, however, he admits that it would be difficult in practice to call out the whole, even in the German case. As to the cost per man of those actually in the ranks, he computes it at \$48 in Russia, \$47 in France, \$40 in Germany, \$37 in Italy, and only \$35 in Austria.